

# LaSalle's New Olde Town

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by Bob Meyer, Star Business Reporter

## Developers look to Walkerville to recapture traditional styles

**R**omancing the architecture of the past, Peter Valente plans to recreate an \$18-million "Olde Walkerville" in a wooded area of LaSalle.

Breaking the molds of modern-day housing, Victorian Gardens will be a community of Victorian, Georgian and Colonial style homes nestled in what will be known as the traditional Olde Town Neighbourhood, with a grand boulevard entrance, and interlocking stone roadways with old-fashioned Victorian street lighting.

"People who drive through old Walkerville dream of someday living in one of those stately old homes, but it will never happen."

"Most people aren't prepared to spend the money it would cost for an estate in Walkerville," said the 24-year old son of Remo Valente, President and Owner of Valente Real Estate, who spent more than a year studying old Walkerville and other stately old neighbourhoods in Toronto and Grosse Pointe, Michigan.

Armed with folders of photographs and sketches, the younger Valente then huddled with architects and designers at Unlimited Design Concepts.

### Start in Two Weeks

Located in a stretch of property between Matchette Road and LaSalle Creek south of Stuart Boulevard, phase one of Victorian Gardens will be started in about two weeks and the first house completed for occupancy by Christmas.

Having worked with his father in the Real Estate industry for the past six years while studying marketing at the University of Windsor, he soon acquired a feeling for what a certain class of people wanted in a home and neighbourhood.

There will be two series, the Colonial and the Victorian. The Colonial will cost between \$209,900 and \$304,400 and will be available in models called Connecticut, Maryland, Virginia, New York, New Jersey and New Hampshire. And for the Victorian series, packages costing between \$212,900

and \$296,600 will be available for building the Queen Victoria, Queen Anne, Queen Elizabeth and Queen Mary models.

Phase One will include 44 serviced lots of the entire 73 lot parcel. Each lot is 60 feet by 120 feet. All the homes will have detached two car garages.

Valente said home buyers will save between \$5,000 and \$10,000 if they buy a plan while the properties are being serviced. They will be able to pick and choose a lot and because the homes are custom-built, buyers will also have options on the models and interior design. Pre-finished hardwood floors are included in the living room and dining room if the homes are bought during servicing.

### Custom touches

Capturing the lustre of Windsor's fine old neighbourhoods, Valente said architects designed homes with steeply-pitched roofs and nine-foot-high ceilings. Wood spindle railings surround the fronts of the old Colonials.

The windows, he said, all have to be custom made because the old classics of Victorian, Georgian and Colonial days are no longer available.

When residents drive through the grand boulevard entrance, all they will see are the stately homes in an old-fashioned neighbourhood, beautifully landscaped with shrubs and trees.

Valente said a variety of people are interested -- professionals, move-up buyers, empty nesters and "people who want something different. These homes are so classic, you can't help but fall in love with them."

Valente is also negotiating with Managed Network Systems Inc., Windsor's largest Internet provider, for installation of underground technology providing all of the user's telecommunication needs, including phone, cable, Internet & video conferencing.

### Brick homes



**Real Estate developer Peter Valente, foreground and builder Joe Rauti walk past Georgian style homes on Willstead Crescent. The stately, traditional style of home found in the Walkerville area is the type which will be built in the new LaSalle subdivision called the Olde Town Neighbourhood**

All the homes are brick, two- or three-storey, with three or four bedrooms, hardwood floors in living and dining rooms, and ceramic tile, plus full basements. Sidewalks and driveways will be interlocking brick or stone, or concrete.

Neighbourhood restrictions will not allow eyesores like old cars, campers and boats parked in driveways.

Fencing will be regulated as will the way properties are maintained or renovated.

"At Victorian Gardens, we have set out to create the most unique community in Essex County. We have designed this development as a community vision and the turn-of-the-century architecture was inspired by an original collection of homes from Olde Walkerville and old Victorian communities."

A sales office has been opened on site and can be reached by calling 978-1985.

Valente said about 150 people attending a sales promotion Sunday will be "amazed".